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(54) Entertainment machine

(57) A coin operated machine can be used to play games resulting in scores. The machine stores the highest score in an internal memory (12) and provides a record, such as a printed ticket, to be retained by the player. At the end of a predetermined playing period a prize can be awarded to the player who has attained the highest score.

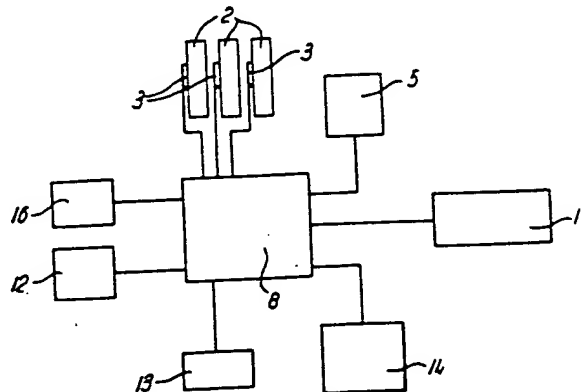
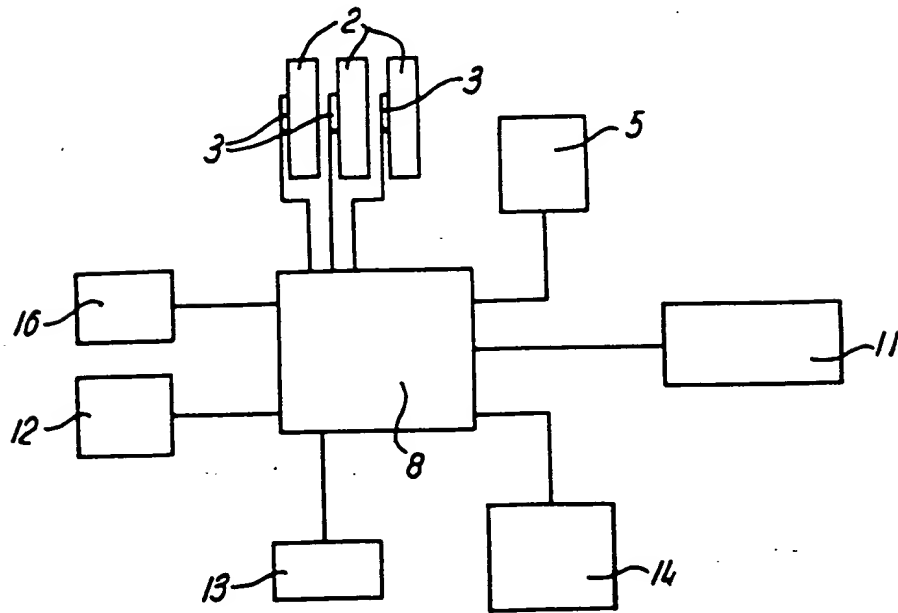
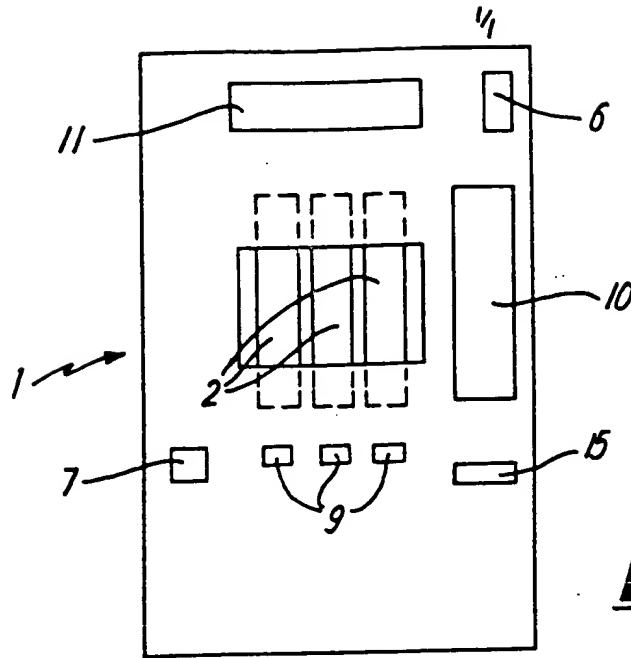


Fig 2

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ENTERTAINMENT MACHINE

This invention relates to an entertainment machine of the kind which can be operated by a player, after actuation of the machine by insertion of one or more coins (or tokens) therein, to play a game resulting in an attained score.

Known entertainment machines of the above kind include machines for playing games of chance, such as fruit machines, and machines for playing games of skill, such as pin-ball machines and video game machines. With such known machines, the player may be motivated to attain the highest possible win or score in an individual game or during a playing session, and entertainment can be derived from this. This motivation can be much promoted by arranging for the machine to pay out prize awards when predetermined wins or scores are attained, and this is commonly the case with fruit machines. However, depending on the nature of the machine and its intended location, it may not always be appropriate or desirable or permissible for there to be provision for such payouts and, by way of example, fruit machines are known which do not give payouts but simply display attained scores.

In some cases with the above mentioned known entertainment machines there can also be the motivation for players to compete against each other during a playing session or even during a period of time, say during an evening or week, and for example, on some video games an

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this way player interest can be much promoted, even for casual players, even in the case of machines for playing games not normally of a competitive nature and in the case of machines which do not give prize payouts. From the point of view of usage of the machine this can be promoted insofar, for example, casual players are encouraged to return to the machine, and this advantageously may have the effect of encouraging persons to re-use other facilities at the site where the machine is located, e.g. petrol filling station facilities.

With regard to the retainable score record, this may take any suitable form but conveniently may comprise a printed ticket. The retainable score record may be issued whenever a score is attained or alternatively may be issued only when the attained score is the highest score (or meets some other ranking criterion) during a particular playing period. The machine may be arranged to display the current highest score.

To facilitate verification of a retainable score record information additional to the score generated by the machine and/or entered by the player may also be stored both on the retainable record and also in the corresponding machine record. Such information may comprise date and/or time and/or a serial number, game number or the like.

The machine may be arranged for playing a game of chance and thus for example may be a fruit machine having a device,

In use, the machine is actuated by a player by insertion of one or more coins or tokens into a coin mechanism 5 through a coin slot 6 and the reels 2 are set in motion by pressing a start button 7. rotation of the reels 2 is controlled by a microprocessor-based control circuit 8 which feeds pulses to the stepper motors 3. When the reel 2 come to rest their positions are evaluated by the control circuit 8 (such positions being determined from their starting positions and the number of pulses fed to the stepper motors 3) and a score is derived in correspondence with the combination of symbols displayed through the window 4, different such combinations corresponding to different scores as indicated on a 'win chart' on the front of the machine housing 1.

15 Nudge and hold buttons 9 are provided so that on occasions (which may be selected by the machine at random) the player is given an opportunity of trying to improve a selected combination at the end of a game by nudging one or more reels 2 through one or more stopping positions and/or at 20 the start of a game by holding one or more reels 2 against rotation.

Randomly and/or on a predetermined basis as determined by the control circuit and/or determined by the stopping position of one or more of the reels 2, feature displays 10 are illuminated on the front of the machine housing and 25 supplementary scores, such as jackpot scores, may be made

dispensed to the player through a slot 15 in the machine.

At the end of the period timed by the timer, the timer is automatically re-set to zero and the memory is cleared. However, a record is kept in a subsidiary memory 16 of the highest score attained by the end of the timed period, together with the above mentioned associated data, and the ticket printer 14 can be instructed, by means of operator controls within the machine, to print such score and data on a ticket and dispense this ticket to an authorised person (site operator) responsible for the operation of the machine.

The player who obtained the highest score by the end of the timed period can obtain a prize from the site operator on presenting his winning ticket which matches with the site operator's ticket.

The machine may show, on the display 11 (or on a remote display device connected to the machine and located at a prominent position elsewhere on the site) information concerning winning scores from one or more previous timed periods, if desired together with the highest score so far in the current timed period.

Provision may be made for the start and duration of the timed period to be set by the site operator using internal machine controls.

With the above described embodiment it will be appreciated that there can be considerable player interest despite the lack of prize payouts from the machine having

CLAIMS

1. An entertainment machine which is operable by a player, after actuation, by insertion therein of one or more coins (or tokens) to play a game resulting in an attained score, wherein said machine has a storage device operable to store at least one such score, and a dispensing device operable to dispense a record bearing the score to be retained by the player.
2. An entertainment machine as claimed in claim 1, wherein said machine is a fruit-machine.
3. An entertainment machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said dispensing device is arranged to dispense said retainable score record in the form of a printed ticket.
4. An entertainment machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said storage device is arranged to store information additional to the score and the dispensing device is operable to dispense said record bearing said additional information as well as said score.
5. An entertainment machine as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein said machine further includes a timer and said storage device and said dispensing device are arranged to store said score and dispense said record only when the attained score is the current highest score during a predetermined timed playing period.

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